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NOTES AND REVIEWS

One of Japan's Great Problems. By GEORGE HEBER JONES, D.D., recently of Seoul, Korea. (A review of *Japan to America*. Edited by NAOICHI MASAOKA. Published under the auspices of the Japan Society of America. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1914. Pp. xii, 235.)

Some years ago the editor of *The Japan Times*, noting a change in the mutual attitude of Japan and America, called attention to the fact that the defense of personal character, to be at once convincing, modest, and dignified, is undoubtedly one of the most difficult things in the world. When unwisely made, it results in further embarrassment and this danger is responsible for what has become from time immemorial a characteristic of the Japanese people: namely, where personalities are involved to wait in silence the vindication which the passage of time can be trusted to produce. Thus, as a rule, public men in Japanese life are disposed to ignore open criticism, and inasmuch as the nation in its collective life carries close affinities to the individual life, it is not surprising that the representatives of the empire have elected to remain silent concerning unfair insinuations and charges crediting them with motives and aims they do not entertain. With a supreme confidence in this practical but time-honored philosophy, they have been content to ignore charges calculated to affect the relations of the empire with other peoples, and to allow to pass unchallenged conceptions concerning themselves and their life which must have inspired them sometimes with amazement, at others with amusement, and in some cases with indignation.

Japan has suffered both at the hands of her friends and her enemies, injudicious and unbalanced praise contributing only in less degree to misunderstanding than has baseless and sometimes malicious misrepresentation. The effect of all this upon Japan's standing as a nation, her credit on the foreign bourses, and her ability to realize her aims and policies has at times not been without its serious aspects. This gives the writer his thesis; namely, that one of the great problems which has confronted Japan is that of making herself understood by other peoples.

That such a problem exists there can be no doubt. A review of the large output of literature appearing within the past two decades concerning Japan indicates that the bulk of it may be divided into three main classes. The first class is that of the narratives of transient visitors which have created what we might style the Japan of the tourist. The impression produced by their writings is that in the sum total of its existence Japan consists of scenery, atmosphere and strange sights, with a sprinkling of open ports, decaying temples, curios and jinrickshas. The second class of writers is that of the enthusiast. Everything is seen with a magnifying glass, and the whole vocabulary of the superlative is worn threadbare in the effort to describe a Japan that has little actual existence outside the imagination of the writers. The third class is the sensationalist, whose narrative whether told on the printed page or rehearsed on the lecture platform, paints Japan as the home of everything bad and the people as a peril to the rest of the human race. This last class reveals an intellectual activity based on large stores of misinformation, or else upon a perversion of ethics which, if manifested against the individual, would expose the offender to a term in the penitentiary. This does not include, however, those honest critics who have frankly and candidly attempted to point out mistakes in national policy, but it does include that altogether large amount of writing bearing upon its face the impress of prejudice and malice. Japan, however, has not lacked for men who have understood her ambitions and ideals and have spoken informingly and accurately concerning them. The names of Brinkley, Griffis, Chamberlain, Satow, Batchelor, and Aston, will live when the great mass of meretricious output shall have passed from memory.

Prince Ito once remarked to the writer that the great problem of statesmen was not that of keeping governments friendly with each other but that of keeping peoples friendly with each other. Governments easily compose the difficulties and misunderstandings which arise in normal international intercourse, but serious things result when peoples become estranged and react unfavorably upon each other. It is, therefore, of supreme importance that nations should give special attention to securing and maintaining a fair and reasonable interpretation of themselves and their purposes among other nations.

It is rare that the foreigner has been able to understand Japan, and in view of the many absurd and bizarre ideas concerning that people and their life which have been put in circulation by

biased writers, it is not surprising that a group of educated Japanese should have undertaken the task of interpreting their nation to the world at large, and discussing in the terms of Japanese thought and experience the great questions confronting them in their development.

A little volume has recently appeared issued under the auspices of the Japan Society of America, with an introduction by its president, Mr. Lindsey Russell, dedicated to this worthy and practical purpose. It is entitled *Japan to America* and consists of a collection of papers by thirty-five representative leaders and citizens of Japan on conditions in their home country and in the relations between the empire and the United States, the whole edited by Mr. Naoichi Masaoka, who was attached as a newspaper correspondent to the entourage of Baron Komura at the Portsmouth Peace Conference. Thus there is put in our hands a book worthy of consideration not only because of its contents, but because of its significant moral purpose to make intelligible to one nation the inner life and purpose of another nation. In these pages we have Japanese sitting in judgment upon themselves as a people for the benefit of their friends and neighbors. Though a significant, yet it is a difficult, rôle to fulfil, and how well they have succeeded only time, the arbiter and vindicator of things Japanese, can tell.

Turning to these essays we find the prime minister, Count Okuma, defining Japan's national mission, which he believes to be "to harmonize eastern and western civilization in order to help bring about the unification of the world." In the belief that Japan can make a large contribution to human progress by doing this she seeks to play an active part in the great drama of world politics.

Baron Kaneko, while admitting that the Japanese people are ever ready to learn from the outside world, protests that they "are never satisfied with being a mere importer of western civilization, with being forever a pupil in the great school of human progress." Japan, therefore, is determined to be a teacher as well as a learner. But what has she to teach? "If there is anything she has to teach it is the fact that mankind is a one and indivisible whole, that the yellow race is not inferior to the white, that all races should coöperate in perfect harmony for the development of the world's civilization."

The real character of the Japanese race is defined by Baron Goto as animated by the principle of Yamato Demashii, but he

leaves us a little in doubt as to what he understands Yamato Demashii to be.

Baron Shibusawa, one of the outstanding figures in Japanese commercial life, gives a very sympathetic and candid statement of Japanese-American relations as they have affected himself, and especially his observation of the discriminatory treatment which has been manifested in certain parts of America against Japanese. He does not hold these to be typical of America's real sentiment toward her Pacific neighbor. While assuring us that there will not be any change in Japan's friendship toward America, he calls attention to the fact that there is peril "that the mass of the people may become enraged if the strained relations continue longer."

President Asano, of the Toyo Kisan Kaisha, treats of the Pacific and of American-Japanese friendship from the Japanese viewpoint. While believing that the world drama of the future will be played upon the Pacific, he is convinced that imperialistic extension of territory is a thing of the past. He holds that America and Japan have it in their power to determine whether or not the civilization of the Pacific basin will be developed without bloodshed. He, therefore, pleads for international good-will and says

those who attempt to weaken the international bond of the two countries are either blind to true conditions or have ulterior designs of profiting by the disaster. A Japanese adage says: "If one dog barks a falsehood, ten thousand others spread it as a truth;" and a single mischiefmaker may cause very serious trouble between nations. To remove international prejudices and suppress the foolish talk of war is, therefore, the bounden duty of every thoughtful man.

Conditions affecting trade especially as they bear upon mutual understanding are discussed by several writers. Mr. Fukui, of the Mitsui Company, thinks it is "a great mistake for any nation to try to do business in the Far East without taking Japan's position geographically and commercially into consideration. Instead of looking upon her as an opponent they should consider her as a business partner and avail themselves of the special facilities she has to offer." Mr. Otani, of the Japan Tea Company, claims that "tea is really the thing that unites the two peoples on the Pacific in bonds of commercial and friendly alliance." He gives a very striking illustration of how considerateness on the part of the McKinley administration induced the United States government to change the oppressive tariff measures which threat-

ened the tea industry in Japan with destruction. Mr. Iwahara believes there is a good outlook for a normal and satisfactory growth of Japanese-American trade in both nations.

Professor Suyehiro, discussing the very delicate question of anti-Japanese sentiment in America and the Japanese attitude towards it, says:

With a view to a speedy and amicable settlement of the outstanding complication we claim that America accede to one or two alternatives—the grant of the right of naturalization to the Japanese, or the conclusion of a treaty to guarantee their rights of owning lands or leasing farms. I venture to say that this is no extravagant claim. Justice demands that America shall treat the Japanese on equal terms with European immigrants, since she has permitted the former to enter and live on her land.

The above quotations give an indication of the freshness and frankness of this message on the part of Japanese leaders to the thinking people of America. It is not possible to go further into the remaining interesting discussions which make up the book. The colonial policy of Japan, the empire's attitude toward the preservation of China's integrity, the improvement of Japanese commercial methods, the prospects for the peace of the world and the relation of Japan to what it regards as the manifestation of a new cult on our part, namely, Americanism, are candidly reviewed. The status of banking and the financial situation, the condition of the railways, the unionization of labor, and kindred problems are all touched. The social and ethical problems of Japan, the development of education and the influence of Western learning in its impact on the East come in for treatment.

Probably no more significant utterance is contained in the book than the statement of Mr. Tokutomi of the influential Tokyo daily, *Kokumin Shimbun*. He finds the connexional bond that gives solidarity to the Japanese nation in the influence and power of the emperor, which he treats under the suggestive title "centripetal Mikadoism." His striking characterization is given in the following words: "Rome was at one time the center of the Roman Empire; hence the adage 'All roads lead to Rome.' In like manner the Mikado is the center of our nation. Considered as a body politic it has him as its sovereign; considered as a distinct race it has him as its leader; considered as a social community it has him as its nucleus. Who then, can contradict me when I say that all our isms—social, racial and political—are included, involved, implicated by this centripetal Mikadoism?"

Whatever may be our view of the estimate which these distinguished and earnest writers have made concerning American aims and purposes as they relate to Japan, it must be granted that they have presented an intelligible and credible interpretation of present-day Japanese life. This estimate stands in striking contrast with the Japan of the globe trotter, and leads us to understand that "peerless Fuji" and the "island-bedecked inland sea," the jog of the jinricksha and the tang of the samisen, are things but incidental to Japan; that instead of the real Japan being as the enthusiast would have us believe, a land of superhuman achievements, it is, instead, a nation still trying to find a solution for the insistent and inescapable problems of national life; that the Japanese people, instead of being a nation devoted to international treachery and inter-racial diabolism, is, on the contrary, a people animated by feelings of genuine neighborliness and friendship, desirous only of good-will and mutual understanding.

Japan stands revealed to us not as an inscrutable Oriental personality, elusive, mysterious and incomprehensible, but as a virile, strong, progressive nation, caught in the grip of kindred social, economic and ethical problems like ourselves and seeking from every source light which will help her solve them. She shares with other nations in a great evolution which keeps her busy trying to work out the problems involved in the increasingly accentuated division between labor and capital; in the normal distribution of her population so as to avoid the evils of overcrowding; in the securing of an adequate food supply for a nation nearly ninety per cent of whose territory is not arable; in the adjustment of the low state of income to the high cost of living; and in the development of an educational system that shall result in righteous character as well as accurate scholarship.

These writers realize that the discordant voices which have sought to speak about Japan in the past have obscured the real Japan. They have therefore spoken and we cannot but be grateful for their message and apply to them the words which Yukio Ozaki has applied to the men who stand for the Peace Movement throughout the world:

If the voice of the mischiefmakers is louder than ours it is only because we are silent. We men of peace are generally too quiet and too modest. We ought to shout and fight as much as our noisy opponents, for our cause is noble and sacred. Let us speak out our hearts; let the joyous voice of peace drown the wicked cry for war; and let it echo and re-echo in melodious harmony from both sides of the Pacific Ocean.